

that his journal had sponsored the meet, and in that way he was barred from the pleasure of participating with the other artists.

Years ago I heard a story about Senator Chilton's fiddling. A long way from Charleston, on Elk River, there lived an old mountaineer who had a recollection of the keen pleasure he had experienced from hearing the Senator play. He looked forward to hearing him again, but the slow years slipped by so fast, that his feet were standing on the brink. But when he heard that the Senator was coming into his county, and he gathered his clan about him and told them that he wanted to hear the Senator play the fiddle once more before he died. His people understood and the Senator was communicated with and accepted the invitation to play. But when he tried to go to the old man's house, Elk river was in flood. There was no boat, and no bridge, and no way to get over. Then the Senator came down to the edge of the river on one side and the old man was brought to the other side, and there across the

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EDITOR.

8, 1926

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swelling stream, the fiddle told the
naked stars the joy and grief of man

I heard a lot of music the other
evening at the armory but it was
more or less by fits and starts. I had
not heard so much that I could not
sleep, and so I left before the square
dances began but they tell me that
there was some dancing before the
the night was over. I always thought
that I would like to dance if it was
permitted, especially with girls. It
seems to be a game in which girls
add considerable zest and interest.
I do not know to this day whether I
ever could dance or not. I drifted
through some mysterious motions in
the square dances of the old days, to
the magic of the fiddle. Some cap-
tain of the game would call the fig-
ures, that is, give the command
There was one peculiar form where
the dancers faced away from each
other, when the captain barked out,
"Do si do!" That sentence always
bothered me. I wondered what it
meant in the original of whatever
language it came from. And after
many years I got an inkling of it in
stud poker poker language. The
gentleman of Spanish birth and
breeding announced that he had to

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gentleman of Spanish birth and breeding announced that he had to go on: "Aces, do si do." It seems that his first card dealt turned down was an ace and his next card was another ace turned up. Thus he had his aces "back to back," the highest possible hand to go with. Now if that is not what do si do means, find out for yourselves.

Fiddling was not only a question of skill but endurance. A fiddler added greatly to the joys of the young persons, but the amusement was not only frowned upon by the great majority of the best and most powerful persons, but absolutely forbidden the children. Thou shalt not dance, was an added commandment. The way it worked as a rule was that it was thoughtly impressed upon the child say of five or six years of age. He must never dance. That and the alternative of hell-fire took strong hold upon his imagination, and he pursued the noiseless tenor of his way, until he became hazy with youth. Then he would fall and trip the light fantastic toe and find great sport in dodging the lightning that was supposed to strike him down for his disobedience. Then he would marry some fine, mountain girl, and when

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some fine, mountain girl, and when
they had children, they would tell
them about the time they were five
and six years old that under no cir-
cumstances must they ever dance.
Under this good old plan the moun-
tains raised the best men and wo-
men the world ever saw, and it is to
be hoped that there is enough of the
iron left in the present hectic gener-
ation to save us after the days of this
cataclysm have passed, and reason
has resumed her away.

Sinful as it may be, wicked and
worldly, and sad beyond conception,
it is only honest to say that I wished
the other day that I could meet with
a couple of dozen other youngsters on
a smooth floor, with one of those old
fiddlers present, and once more try to
shake a foot to the romantic pleadings
of a fiddle. But the kids would not
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Sinful as it may be, wicked and worldly, and sad beyond conception, it is only honest to say that I wished the other day that I could meet with a couple of dozen other youngsters on a smooth floor, with one of those old fiddlers present, and once more try to shake a foot to the romantic pleadings of a fiddle. But the kids would not stand for it. Grandpa must behave. I am sure the fiddler would have enjoyed it more for there in that great room he was like a lamb in a large place. It took more than a fiddle string to fill that aching void.

The perpetual motion of a good bow arm in the old days, was one of the long distance tests. Along about the sixth hour of the dance, the fiddler would take time out for refreshments. This was about two o'clock in the morning, and the shank of the evening. At this time he would probably get a surreptitious drink or two, and the bucks would make him up his purse. Being thus refreshed, encouraged, and strengthened he was able to furnish music for the dance until breakfast. Music consisted of

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couraged, and strengthened he was
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until breakfast. Music consisted of
one fiddler. More would have been a
superfluity. And there is no question
that the fiddle music is the affinity
of dancing. That king of instrum-
ents, the piano, be it played ever so
cunningly, could not furnish the
wild abandon to a mountain dance. I
can remember occasions when the
fiddler was absent, that the piano was
substituted, and it was like church
music and the danced bogged down
and quit. But let the fiddle speak
and bright eyed beauties respond.
There is something haunting and
compelling about it. No wonder that
the pulpit thundered against the in-
sidious temptations of the devil's
own instrument the fiddle, and the

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ing. innocent young lads and lassies hard-
rest, ly knew what to do, with the fiddle
ven- tugging at their heart strings, and
r of duty opposing its dreadful influence.

"By the path the younger son must
tread,
Ere he win to hearth and saddle of
his own,
Mid the riot of the shearers in the
shed,
In the silence of his quiet camp
alone.
In the evening, on a bucket, upside
down,
I whisper what the bravest won't

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Mid the riot of the shearers in the
shed,
In the silence of his quiet camp
alone.
In the evening, on a bucket, upside
down,
I whisper what the bravest won't
confess,
I am Music, I am Torment, I am
Town,
I am all that ever went with Eve-
ning Dress."

It was very hard in the old days to find among the staid householders of the mountains, homes that would countenance the dance. One of the great drawbacks was that it meant an all night affair, and there would

T. S. McNeel F. F. McLaughlin

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be no sleep for anyone in the house.
This gave rise to the platform dance.
A plank floor was laid in the shade
of the trees and there the dances
were held, but that had its draw
backs. Chaperone it ever so care-
fully, there remained an outlaw ele-
ment who would insist on bringing
jugs to the picnic, and the surgeon
would say it in stitches. The old
time doctor sewed some of the finest
seams you ever saw as a result of
parties of this kind. They say in the
city, that certain lawless youths
carry something on the hip. They
ought to have seen the full bellied
jug of the old days.

That fiddle music the other night
carried me back. The boys and girls
were taking it with a rather bored
look. But I could see old fellows
standing on tip-toes and trying to
get a fill of the music, and getting
along about as well as if they were
eating thin soup with a splinter. I
felt like saying to the old boys to
yearn no more, for a tender grace of
a day that is dead, will never come
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were taking it with a rather bored look. But I could see old fellows standing on tip-toes and trying to get a fill of the music, and getting along about as well as if they were eating thin soup with a splinter. I felt like saying to the old boys to yearn no more, for a tender grace of a day that is dead, will never come back to us.

Here is one solution of the craze for fiddle music. For something near a hundred years it was the only music known on the Western Waters. It stands to reason that none of the larger instruments could be imported to the log houses of the wilderness. That was to come later. They could not pack them in. The fiddle could come in adding only a few ounces weight, and if one was not brought with the frying pan, the axe, and the auger, and the rifle gun, and the knife, then one could be made out of the native woods without trouble.

There has been much said about the Cremona violins, and the immense price that they bring today. But it takes a more discerning

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ot the native woods without trouble.

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the Cremona violins, and the im-
mense price that they bring today.
But it takes a more discriminating
ear than mine to sense their superior-
ity over the ancient fiddle whittled
out with a pocket knife on the head
of Bitter Creek. At Cremona in
Italy, the fiddles made by some of
the neighbors have attained a great
reputation, and they are favorite
themes for song and story in modern
times. At Cremona, the Amati,
Stradivari, Guarneri, and Ruggieri
families, all fine old Italian hands,
could make good fiddles, and they
sell at a fortune now. The older the
better. They have been at it over
three hundred years.

Fiddler McIlwaine, of Erbacon,
in the adjoining county of Wash-

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Fiddler McIlwaine, of Erbacon, in the adjoining county of Webster, went to the contest the other day carrying his precious fiddle. He took a taxicab. Got out of the cab and forgot his fiddle. He discovered his loss and was wild about it. It was a Cremona. A Stradivarius, worth twenty thousand dollars. I know this to be true for I saw it in the paper. He had to play on a borrowed fiddle. After the big show was over, the priceless fiddle was discovered in a pawnshop, where it had been put up for fifty cents by some old timer crazy to get money to attend the fiddler's concert.

I can remember plenty of cases where organs and pianos were carried to people's houses slung on great poles. There is no question about the universal longing for music. With a great mountain people the

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I can remember plenty of cases where organs and pianos were carried to people's houses slung on great poles. There is no question about the universal longing for music. With a great mountain people, the boys and girls born in the mountains, found in the fiddle the highest expression of melody and it had a strange and fascinating effect upon them, which was thoroughly well understood by their spiritual advisers. The Scotch intellect controlled. While it is said that Oliver Cromwell had a fiddler, on investigation, it seems that the facts are these. That once when Oliver Cromwell was at a castle, that in a hidden apartment from which no sound could issue, was a noble fugitive who played tunes on a fiddle unbeknownst to old Ironsides, and after the restoration, he went by the name of Oliver's fiddler.

For more than a hundred years the hardwood forests of the Appalachians guarded by a savage race had stopped the advance of the Christian people. It remained for the Scotch to conquer it and to bring about the

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was a noble fugitive who played tunes on a fiddle unbeknownst to old Ironsides, and after the restoration, he went by the name of Oliver's fiddler.

For more than a hundred years the hardwood forests of the Appalachians guarded by a savage race had stopped the advance of the Christian people. It remained for the Scotch to conquer it and to bring about the formation of a republic.

At that time these immigrants had been raised in a faith that taught that everything that was pleasant was sinful. It was wrong to laugh. It was wrong to write poetry. It was a sin to visit a friend on Sunday. While it was right to bathe, to swim for pleasure was sinful. It was a sin to travel on Sunday, even to cross a river that was rising. It was a sin for a tavern keeper to entertain as a guest a Roman Catholic. It was a sin to shave on Sunday. The list of things that were prohibited includes almost everything that is encouraged now, except possibly that whiskey was classed as a food at that time. And

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se. these laws though not the secular
ce. laws of the land were far more bind-
de ing. The Church took over the con-
es trol of the country. Organized leg-
w islative bodies, later to furnish the
e- initiative in America for the most
e powerful of all nations. The Church,
g and I speak of the Presbyterian
n church. had power of imprisonment,
d to impose fines, to whip, or to brand
t with a hot iron. Doing penance be-
f fore the congregation was one of the
e usual ways of getting right with the
s Church.

To even listen to music was prohi-
bited, much less to make music.
There could be no music in the
churches, and not even at weddings
was it permitted. A special act was
passed making it an offense punish-
able with a fine and such further
punishment as the session saw fit to
have music at weddings. See regis-
ter of the Presbytery of Glasgow and
other records.

Dancing was especially prohibited

have music at weddings. See register of the Presbytery of Glasgow and other records.

Dancing was especially prohibited and condemned and singers were to be put in prison.

At the same time down about London way, for instance, there was another set that was headed towards Fiddler's Green, a particular enclosure of the Elysian fields, where there is to be perpetual mirth, a fiddle that never ceases to untiring dancers, plenty of grog, and unlimited tobacco. This section assigned especially to sailors.

The only fiddle known in Scotland was the Caledonian Cremona, a name for the itch, so called from the scratching movement evoked.

It was in the plan of life that these two elements were to meet in the New World, and to form a race known as the American, to which we are all proud to belong. We are surely the children of immigrants, though now that the word is ab-

It was in the plan of life that these two elements were to meet in the New World, and to form a race known as the American, to which we are all proud to belong. We are surely the children of immigrants, though now that the word is abhorred.

Then came the fiddle and desire and duty conflicted, but both played their parts. It resulted in a civilization that with all its faults is the best that the world has yet seen.

Gradually the instrumental instruments found their way into the church building, though I do not recall having seen a fiddle in church. And the new fangled dances have dispensed with the fiddle. The hope of the land hug each other to fixed music.

There is a subconsciousness that yields to the sinful fiddle, and that draws us to its wicked strains, while duty points the other way.

The other day in Charleston, the dance had no particular effect upon the community, other than a slight

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Gradually the instrumental instruments found their way into the church building, though I do not recall having seen a fiddle in church. And the new fangled dances have dispensed with the fiddle. The hope of the land hug each other to fixed music.

There is a subconsciousness that yields to the sinful fiddle, and that draws us to its wicked strains, while duty points the other way.

The other day in Charleston, the dance had no particular effect upon the community, other than a slight trembling of the earth.

